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Senate passes bill to protect dignity and human rights of intellectually and developmentally disabled

SALEM, Ore.-Many states have commissions or agencies dedicated to adjudicating the rights of individuals with disabilities (IDD). Oregon has no such commission. But, today, the Senate voted to pass [Senate Bill 834](#), to help solve this problem.

Senate Republican Deputy Leader Tim Knopp, R-Bend, said passing the Senate is step one, and that now the bill must pass the House of Representatives. He feels it will likely pass, but with upcoming legislative deadlines the bill may die on the calendar.

"Our House of Representatives colleagues must to do everything they can to help pass this bill so the governor can sign it into law, otherwise we will continue being a state that doesn't adequately protect our most vulnerable and individuals with disabilities," Knopp said. "I'm glad both sides of the aisle could come together today to fight for the dignity and human rights of intellectually and developmentally disabled Oregonians."

Federal law protects the rights of intellectually and developmentally disabled individuals. However, sometimes these rights are unnecessarily restricted and oversight is necessary to protect the rights of disabled individuals.

Several states have commissions or agencies dedicated to adjudicating the rights of individuals with disabilities. Arizona has a Human Rights Committee on Persons with Developmental Disabilities to review incidents regarding developmentally disabled people. Georgia has their own version called the Human Rights Council. Washington has an independent Human Rights Commission which administers and enforces the state's "Law Against Discrimination." Their Law Against Discrimination covers discrimination against mentally disabled people in public accommodations, employment,

housing, and credit and insurance.

"Controlling basic things like choosing when you eat lunch and when you shower matter in everyone's lives. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, IDD, are no different in that they have their own schedules they want to keep. Having someone else tell you what time you shower and eat tells us we are not equal to everyone else," said Gabrielle Guedon, of Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition. Guedon [urged members of the Senate Human Services Committee to pass the bill](#) because she said it would help safeguard the human rights of people with IDD.

"Human rights commissions existed during the period of the Fairview and Eastern Oregon Training Centers; they were called human rights committees back then," [said Katie Rose](#), a member of the IDDC executive committee. "They played a significant role in protecting people's basic human rights in an inhumane system. Many people continue to have their rights restricted, for a variety of reasons, well-intentioned and not. They need protection from an independent oversight body."

The public hearing on this bill can be viewed [here](#).

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